

Below is the Victorian NDCO response to the transition consultation paper:

**Disability has been completely omitted from this paper.** Cohorts such as Koori, low socio-economic and rural receive special mention which begs the question why disability does not? It would appear that the needs of young Australians who experience disability are of no concern when in reality their transition post-school is of great concern.

ABS statistics indicate people with disability in Australia do not share the same education and employment participation and success rates as people without disability.

This is supported by several papers which have been released focussing on people with disability with regards to their post-school education and employment participation rates and outcomes such as: *Disability in Australia: trends in prevalence, education, employment and community living* (Aust. Govt. IHW); *SHUT OUT: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia* (Aust Govt. FHCSIA); *From learning to employment Successful transition for Equity Groups* (Skills Victoria, DIIRD) and various NCVET reports such as *Disability and learning outcomes: How much does the disability really matter?*.

The Victorian State Govt. DEECD released *Pathways to re-engagement through flexible learning options - A policy direction for consultation* which included the following information:

**Table 2.1: Risk factors for disengaging from school (pg.8)**

**Children and young people with disabilities**

International evidence indicates that students with disabilities are twice more likely to leave school early than their peers without disabilities.

Around 63 per cent of Australian students with disabilities experienced difficulty at school. Intellectual/learning difficulties, fitting in socially and communication difficulties are the most common difficulties experienced.

Approximately 12 per cent of children and young people across Australia report being absent from school at least one day per week as a result of their disability.

**Children and young people with mental health concerns**

Children and young people who have poor mental health, or who have a parent/carer with poor mental health, often experience difficulties at school. One in seven children and young people aged between 4 and 17 years experience mental health issues.

Given the above, it is disturbing that disability does not rate a mention in the Vic State DEECD transition consultation. Especially as students with a disability often have specific transition issues to explore such as eligibility for funding, use of (assistive) technology, alternative support options and negotiations, job redesign and workplace adaptations etc. and may be an essential part of any transition to further education, training and/or employment.

It is also disappointing that data collation about students with disability in mainstream schools is omitted from the OnTrack Survey. Disability is also not included in the MySchool information.

The Victorian State DEECD *Program for Students with Disabilities* relies on the medical model of disability for funding approval and allocation. While this may assist schools and some individuals with disabilities, it does not provide mechanisms to support all students with disability (regardless of type and severity). Of interest is the following news article: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/seeking-a-new-deal-on-dyslexia-20100528-wl5z.html> which is about dyslexia not being recognised as a disability or supported in Australian schools. Participation and therefore transition for students with learning disability needs to be considered.

The quality and quantity of transition and careers planning and advice differs extremely in schools across the State. It would appear that the vast majority of Careers Teachers are not equipped, resourced or adequately informed when it comes to students with disability (again this cohort includes students other than those receiving funding under the *Program*). This is an area that requires attention. Often the responsibility for "transition and careers planning" is

handed over to the Integration Coordinator. This is potentially problematic. Facilitating work experience for students with disability is also an area of difficulty – many students end up doing work experience in areas that may not match their vocational aspirations but instead do work experience in areas where it is “easier” to place them.

**NB:** The NDCO network is available for further consultation if required.

On behalf of NDCOs Victoria  
Cressida Metcalf  
National Disability Coordination Officer  
University of Melbourne  
21 Nixon Street  
Shepparton  
Victoria 3630  
Tel: +61 3 5823 6624  
Fax: +61 3 5822 0675

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